



ISLAMIC ONLINE UNIVERSITY

INSIGHTS

MAGAZINE



**How Allah
Has Preserved
the Arabic
Language**

**The Close
Connection
between
Spirituality
and Physical
Health**

**Internet
Safety**

**I graduated
from IOU at 68**

**IOU Experience:
A Student's Perspective**

**I Learn So I
Can Teach**





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The Ummah's Network: Resetting and Strengthening Its Password

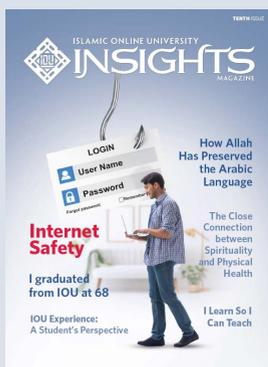
"And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves..." (Quran 3:103).

The above verse of the Noble Quran implies that it is important for all Muslims across the globe to be united. This is a direct command from Almighty Allah. But the question is: how can this unity be achieved in a time where in addition to individual challenges as Muslims, technology, secularism, and modernism pervade our lives on a daily basis?

Nowadays, it is obvious that as Islam continues to spread across the globe, the need to find the best way to unite the Ummah is paramount. More so, those who invite others to Islam may also need to amend their methods in ways that adapt to contemporary society and culture, while still maintaining the Sunnah of Prophet

Muhammad (ﷺ). This can be done by including the use of technology and social media platforms. It is of equal importance though, that we encourage and develop unity among ourselves as brothers and sisters in Islam, and strive for the type of kinship where if even one of us suffers injury we all endure it as our own and support each other. This is what we should strive for as a global Muslim community. As the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever." (Sahih Muslim).

Even though a few traditional Islamic scholars argue that exposure to modern technology like television and Internet bring about distractions to the Ummah, as most technological innovations are addictive dangerous tools used



MEET THE TEAM

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YOUR VIEWS

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nowadays to spread fitna (atrocities) on earth, research has shown that the merits attached to it significantly outweigh its demerits in considering all ramifications.

Technology generally has numerous advantages. Firstly, the dissemination of the words of Allah and His final Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ) can be executed swiftly and effectively via digital devices. For instance, the innovation of smartphones and the Internet have made it easy for Muslims to connect online and share productive ideas and vital information about common issues affecting Muslims across the globe, even without having any physical contact. Additionally, a means to the memorization of the Quran has become easily available with the advent of MP3 players and tablets, since most Islamic related apps can be downloaded for free or purchased at low-cost on Google Play Store. Most importantly, accessibility to scientifically supported information is made available at the fingertips of every Internet user, and it can be translated into any preferred language.

The international reach of authentic Islamic knowledge for Muslims and non-Muslims would not be possible without this scientific innovation. In fact, the Islamic Online University (IOU) would not have been able to reach over five hundred thousand students across the globe without technology.

In conclusion, it is clear that modern tools like the Internet, when properly used, can encourage unity in the Ummah by spreading authentic Islamic knowledge. And they may have useful benefits, like connecting Muslims all over the world with proper intentions. Therefore, let us embrace the use of modern technology, primarily to inform, reform, and transform the Ummah for rewards and blessings of Allah in this life and the life and in the hereafter. And let us use technology as a means of propagating da'wah, "Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity" (Quran 3:104).



By Mutiu Olawuyi

Br. Mutiu is the Academic Head of IOU Intensive English Course (IEC) Horn of Africa chapter. Applied Linguist, the author of five (5) books and the editor of over fifteen (15) books, academic journals and newspapers. He is also a Freelance Journalist, Literary Activist, and a Peace Advocate.

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Message from the Founder and Chancellor: IOU Welcomes You with Open Arms

As-salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuh.

I invite you to become a part of the Islamic Online University (IOU) experience, through which the various gates of knowledge have been opened for you. Having been made possible by the invention of the Internet—a human creation resulting from Divine Inspiration—Online study brings knowledge to your very home, rather than requiring people to traverse the earth to acquire the sciences known as “Islamic and Islamized studies.”

IOU offers graduate, undergraduate, diploma, and certificate programs in English—carefully packaged to satisfy your needs. You may also join the undergraduate program at one of our non-English campuses, and study in Russian, Urdu, or Bahasa.

All courses are conducted in virtual classrooms, and communication between staff and students is maintained through emails and telecommunications, thereby allowing students to set their study timetables according to their personal schedules.

Currently, the University has seven departments: Islamic Studies; Psychology; Business Administration; Information Technology; Economics, Banking and Finance; and Arabic Language and Linguistics.

In order to enhance the position and reputation of the IOU and maintain excellence in our teaching, learning and research, we are continuously updating and improving our programs of study so that it can be accessible to all and not simply to a few privileged ones.

The IOU works continuously, throughout the year, to improve the lives of our students to the best of our abilities.

I sincerely hope that you will take full advantage of this unique opportunity to fulfill your religious duty of seeking and sharing knowledge while securing worldly benefits, as I call you to join us in “Changing the Nation through Education.”

Wa salaamu 'alaykum.

Sincerely,

Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips

“Making authentic Islamic knowledge readily available to the world through the Internet solely for God’s pleasure is a noble life-goal and a mission well worth sacrificing all of one’s energies and means for.”



A Brief Introduction to E-commerce

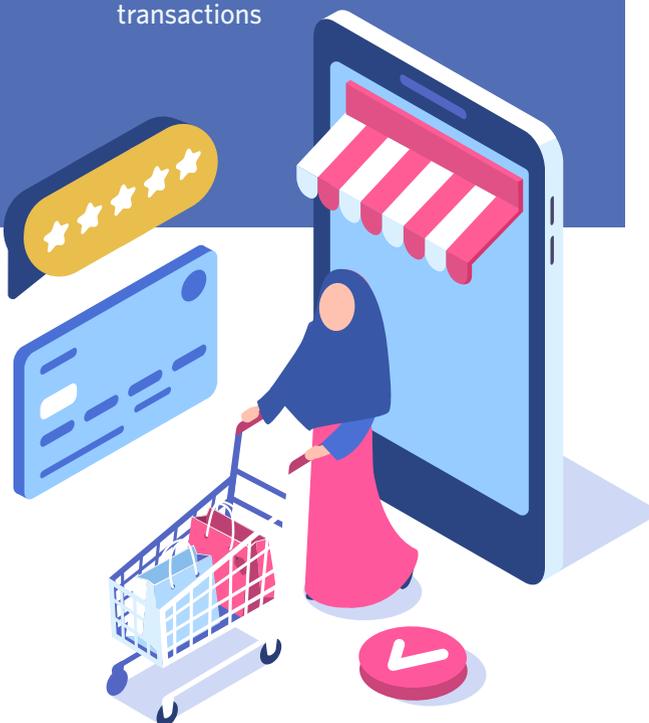
What is E-commerce?

Electronic commerce, commonly known as e-commerce, is a type of business/industry where buying and selling of products or services are conducted over electronic systems such as the Internet and other computer networks. Electronic commerce draws on technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, Internet marketing, online transaction processing, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems. Modern electronic commerce typically uses the World Wide Web at least at one point in the transaction's life-cycle, although it may encompass a wider range of technologies such as e-mail, mobile devices, social media, and telephones as well. Among the most popular e-commerce websites that are dominating the e-commerce platform are Alibaba, Amazon, E-bay, Flipkart, Walmart, and Best Buy.

Electronic commerce is generally considered to be the sales aspect of e-business. It also consists of the exchange of data to facilitate the financing and payment aspects of business transactions. This has proven to be an effective and efficient way of communication within an organization and is actually one of the most effective and useful ways of conducting business.

E-commerce can be divided into the following:

- E-tailing or “virtual storefronts” on websites with online catalogs, sometimes gathered into a “virtual mall”
- Buying or selling on various websites and/or online marketplaces
- The gathering and use of demographic data through web contacts and social media
- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), the business-to-business exchange of data
- E-mail and fax, and their use as media for reaching prospective and established customers (for example, with newsletters)
- Business-to-business buying and selling
- The security of business transactions



Different Types of Major E-commerce

Business-to-Business (B2B)

B2B e-commerce is simply defined as e-commerce transactions between companies and among businesses. About 80% of e-commerce is of this type, and most experts predict that B2B e-commerce will continue to grow faster than the B2C segment. The B2B market has two primary components: e-infrastructure and e-markets. Some notable examples include Intel selling microprocessors to Microsoft, and Heinz selling tomato ketchup to McDonald's.

Business-to-Consumer (B2C)

B2C, commerce between companies and consumers, involves customers gathering information, purchasing physical goods (i.e., tangibles such as books or consumer products), or information goods, or goods of electronic material or digitized content, (i.e. such as software, or e-books); and for information goods, receiving products over an electronic network. It is the second largest, and earliest form of e-commerce. One good example would be Dell selling a laptop to you as a consumer.

Business-to-Government (B2G)

B2G is generally defined as commerce between companies and the public sector. It refers to the use of the Internet for public procurement, licensing procedures, and other government-related operations. This kind of e-commerce has two features: first, the public sector assumes a pilot/leading role in establishing e-commerce; second, it is assumed that the public sector has the greatest need for

making its procurement system more effective. A web-based purchasing policy increases the transparency of the procurement process (and reduces the risk of irregularities.) To date, however, the size of the B2G e-commerce market as a component of total e-commerce is insignificant, as government e-procurement systems remain undeveloped. Business tax payments, filing reports, or selling goods or services to government agencies are a few examples of B2G e-commerce.

Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C)

C2C is simply commerce between private individuals or consumers. This type of e-commerce is characterized by the increased growth of electronic marketplaces and online auctions, particularly in vertical industries where firms/businesses can bid for what they want from multiple suppliers. C2C seems to have the greatest potential for developing new markets with examples such as Rahim buying an iPad from Raihana on e-Bay, or selling a car to your friend.

Mobile Commerce (M-commerce)

M-commerce is the actual buying and selling of wireless goods and the services of wireless technology. This would include handheld devices such as cellular telephones and personal digital assistants (PDAs). Nowadays, Japan is the global leader in m-commerce. As content delivery over wireless devices becomes faster, more secure and scalable, many people expect that m-commerce will surpass wireline e-commerce as the method of choice for digital commerce transactions. This may prove to be true for the Asia-Pacific sector, for example, where there are more mobile phone users than there are computer users. Some prime examples include mobile ticketing, mobile banking, and information services.



Impact of Electronic Commerce

E-commerce and e-business are not solely the Internet, websites, or dot-com companies. It is about a new business concept that incorporates all previous business management and economic concepts. As such, e-business and e-commerce impact many areas of business and disciplines of business management studies. For example:

Marketing – issues of online advertising, marketing strategies, and consumer behavior and cultures. One of the areas which it impacts particularly, is direct marketing. In the past, this was mainly door-to-door, home parties (like the Tupperware parties), and mail order using catalogs or leaflets. This moved to telemarketing and TV selling with the advances in telephone and television technology, and finally developed into e-marketing spawning 'eCRM' (customer relationship management) data mining and the like, creating new channels for direct sales and promotion.

Computer Sciences – development of different network and computing technologies and languages to support e-commerce and e-business, for example linking front and back office legacy systems with the 'web-based' technology.



Finance and Accounting – online banking; issues of transaction costs; accounting and auditing implications where ‘intangible’ assets and human capital must be tangibly valued in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

Economics – the impact of e-commerce on local and global economies; understanding the concepts of a digital and knowledge-based economy, and how this fits into economic theory.

Production and Operations

Management – the impact of on-line processing has led to reduced cycle times. It takes seconds to deliver digitized products and services electronically. Similarly, the time for processing orders can be reduced by more than 90 percent, from days to minutes. Production systems are integrated with finance marketing and other functional systems as well as with business partners and customers.

Conclusion

E-commerce is the sale or purchase of goods or services conducted over computer networks by methods specifically designed for the purpose of receiving or placing of orders. Even though goods or services are ordered electronically, and payments are made electronically, the ultimate delivery of the goods or services does not have to be conducted Online.

An e-commerce transaction can be between enterprises, households, individuals, governments, and other public or private organizations. Included in these electronic transactions are orders made over the web, extranet, or electronic data interchange. The type of transaction made is defined by the method of placing the order. Normally excluded are orders made by telephone calls, fax, or manually typed e-mails.



By Mohsin Nazir

Br. Mohsin holds a Masters in Information Technology from the Central University of Kashmir. He has extensive teaching and research experience. Currently, he is a lecturer at the Department of Information Technology, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University.

Internet Safety

The Internet is basically an interconnection of computer networks, that controls several of our daily activities such as searching for information, shopping for goods and services, carrying out business transactions, or connecting with family and friends abroad or locally on the go. However, just like most aspects of life, it is a double-edged sword. Apart from all the advantages mentioned, there are also many disadvantages, such as virus/malware infections, identity theft, Internet scams, cyberbullying, fraud, and access to illicit content. Therefore, Internet users need to keep some important safeguards in mind to ensure optimum online safety.



1. You have to ensure that your computer is kept secure at all times.

This can be done by installing anti-virus software, which should always be updated in order to be able to have the latest virus definitions; thus, enabling the computer to detect the latest form of threats at the moment. Furthermore, frequently scan all the files on the computer to ensure that they are virus/malware free. The use of firewalls also

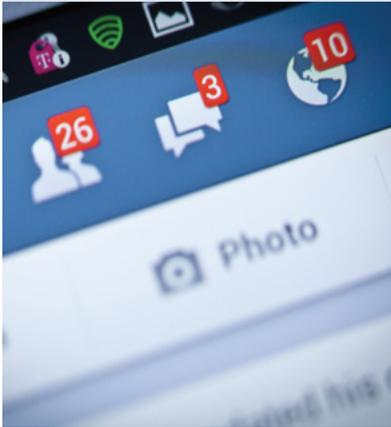
adds more security to the computer by monitoring and controlling what data comes in and goes out based on the set of security rules on the system. When online, you have to be careful, especially when it comes to links provided to other websites. If they look questionable, avoid them, and the same applies to e-filing download links that may lead to downloading dangerous programs or files, which in turn can harm the computer or steal your data.



2. Password protection is a prerequisite to most sites that store personal information.

You should be very careful when choosing a password. It should contain at least eight characters and a combination of numbers, symbols, upper and lower-case letters that are easy to remember. An example of a good password is '10Ln-R=lq!' which can be remembered easily as 'Ten(10) LAST(L) nights(n) RAMA-DAN(R) contain (=) laylatul(l) qadr(q) emphasis(!)' Nevertheless, you should try

to change passwords frequently, at least once or twice a month, and try to have different passwords on all the sites that you have an account on. In order to remember them, you can write them down and keep them in a safe place, or use a password storage application. It is very important to remember to log out when using public computers, and do not allow programs to save your login credentials as most browsers do. So when using a shared computer at the workplace or Internet cafes, for your own safety, do not allow the browser to save the login details after the successful login.



3. The use of social media is a daily activity for most people.

It is necessary to be sensitive when sharing information such as full name, date of birth, and location, which is normally obtained from the GPS of your device and then shown to other users on the same platform. Sharing information, such as your location, can result in the hands of unwanted, dangerous people such as kidnappers. This information should always be kept hidden by using privacy settings on the account. If this method is unavailable, then some parts of the entered information should be altered. It is advisable to avoid sharing personal information in forums. Try to restrict your account settings to those who are connected as your friends only, or as phone contacts only for applications such as WhatsApp. Avoid accepting any unknown friend request from unfamiliar accounts, and it is better not to engage in any conversations with strangers.



4. Lastly, a common security threat is Internet fraud and scams.

As a user, you should always confirm information or the validity of a site before proceeding with a transaction. An example to make this point clear is receiving an email from a family member or a close friend telling you that they are in trouble and need your help. There is a chance that the account used to contact you has been hacked and the hacker is trying to exploit you. In cases like these, try to confirm that help is really needed by contacting one of his/her family members by phone before going ahead with the assistance. Furthermore, if you have any government officials demanding money or other information, be sure to visit the actual website of the government official; go to their contact section and consult them further to confirm that the information given is factual. In addition, when buying items Online, ensure that the site you are buying from is secure; meaning that in the address bar you have HTTPS (with the "s") and not HTTP only: (i.e. <https://www.abc.com> and not <http://www.abc.com.ng>).

These are some of the basic requirements every person should be aware of when using the Internet in order to ensure safety and avoid potential dangers. May Allah continue to protect us all. Ameen.



By Ibrahim Isa

Br. Ibrahim, based in Kaduna, Nigeria, has a B.Eng. in Electrical Engineering. At IOU, he is a Web developer and teaches some IOU courses. Furthermore, he is a researcher in the field of telecommunications at UKZN. He is passionate about programming, computing, telecoms, electronics, and working for the progress of Islam.

Social Media Pitfalls

“Always trying to please others is definitely an assured path to stress and failures in life.” —Edmond Mbiaka

Though not written by a Muslim, this quote is closely related to what Islam teaches us. Perhaps you may be confused and wonder, “What does this quote have to do with the topic of social media?” The answer is, “Quite a lot!”

Social media can have positive and negative effects on our lives. Sadly, we may not realize the latter until it is too late. Let’s examine some scenarios that often take place Online:

Posting Images

This example is related mainly to women. Dressed up as ‘hijabi’ Barbie dolls while trying to adjust the lighting that accentuates the photos, we yearn to display our most beautiful physical side to the world. This triggers the never-ending chain of ‘likes’ and comments from females, as well as from the opposite sex, and we have no qualms about it. Let’s pause and think; What are we doing? Do we need attention and approval from strangers? Are we not satisfied with the validation of our family members and close friends?

When we post pictures online, we are giving the world access to our personal lives, and we are seeking their validation. Though we proudly list the many security measures available, have we forgotten or overlooked that this is the age of ‘screenshots?’ That, no matter what security we have in place, we cannot prevent anyone from taking a screenshot of our pictures?

Status Updates

Being part of social media causes us to exhibit some unusual online behavior. We are always



“**What a stressful activity! Every single moment of our lives is on public display.**”

refreshing our Facebook pages and checking the newsfeed; looking, sometimes even prying, into other people's lives and affairs. What a stressful activity! Every single moment of our lives is on public display. The quality time that we spend with our loved ones is displayed for others to view with the sole intention of letting them know how 'happy' or 'blessed' we

are, and to earn the maximum number of likes and awestruck comments. In reality, we have invited many others to envy us for what Allah has blessed some of us over others.

Perhaps, we don't realize that others can only dream of attaining or spend all their lives trying to attain those qualities and possessions Allah has blessed us with. However, in the name of social media, we choose to flaunt these blessings to a wider audience seeking their approval.

We should be content to share our social media with

only the ones who love us dearly, the ones who truly care about us, and not with mere acquaintances in addition to their acquaintances. Feelings of safety and security result from familiar people; people such as true friends and family members. They will delight in seeing our photos and share that joy with others, all the while making du'a that Allah increases our bounty. On the other hand, by sharing our lives with strangers, there is no way to know their true feelings or intentions. This reality can result in both anxiety and stress.



Where Are We Heading?

Social media makes us forgetful of our real purpose in life and heedless about the consequences of our deeds. Suppose, in your mad rush at posting and trying to receive the highest number of likes and accolades, you posted something which was Islamically incorrect. Your initial sin would be multiplied by the number of people who read your post and implemented it.

Then, even after your death,

you would carry the burden of those who implemented it. Finally, on Judgment Day, you would stand in front of Allah with your book of deeds and you would see a list of sins resulting from those frivolous posts, tweets, and even retweets. What a heavy sin to have accumulated due to social media! What a stressful situation on that Day, which was caused by trying to please others!

My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you seek the pleasure of people over the pleasure of Allah, then pay attention to what the Prophet ﷺ said about

this: "Whoever sought the pleasure of Allah though it was displeasing to the people then Allah becomes pleased with him, and will make the people pleased with him. And whoever sought the pleasure of the people though it was displeasing to Allah then Allah becomes displeased with him and will make the people displeased with him" (Ibn Hibban/Tirmidhi).

All that we have been struggling and striving to achieve; the fame, the glory, the respect, the honor, Allah has placed in each one of them His pleasure and displeasure!

The Internet will tempt you with forbidden things, but if your imaan (faith in Allah) is strong, you will refrain from those sites automatically. Though you will have the urge to click on such content and indulge in it, there will be an invisible barrier between you and it and you will not do it, because the fear of Allah and the desire to please Him have reached your heart. You realize that Allah and His pleasure are more important to you than pleasing others, so you refrain from it.

Technology isn't bad, but how we use it is what matters. If you do not know how to discipline yourself when using social media, and you find it overpowering you negatively, then it is time to cut yourself off from it. If you find social media impacting your life, your relations, your worship, and your work negatively, detach yourself from it NOW.

Since Allah has blessed us with technology, He will question us on how we used it. Let us use it to please Him, and in those areas which displease Him, make the necessary changes in our lives immediately. Unfollow or unlike any page that makes you trespass the halal boundaries or that you feel uncomfortable. Start filtering out all obscene content and do not hesitate to unfriend all those people who you know



“ Since Allah has blessed us with technology, He will question us on how we used it. Let us use it to please Him, and in those areas which displease Him, make the necessary changes in our lives immediately.”

are luring you away from your faith. Repent for past negligence and ignorance. Allah accepts sincere repentance from all His servants. This is a guaranteed way to remove stress if you really love Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

There is a famous hadith where the Prophet (ﷺ) strongly urges us to take care of our time and our health before a time comes when our time is limited and our health failing. (Ahmad, Sahih)

Our time and health should have a direct bearing on social media, as they have on other human activities. Therefore, a moderate amount of time should be spent on Facebook, Twitter, etc. Some people have abused their health by spending

hours in front of the computer screen, which is detrimental to the eyes, and sitting for long periods of time is detrimental to their spines and backs.

Furthermore, restricting social media activities to only beneficial and educational Islamic content will shorten the overall amount of time spent on the computer, not to mention the peace of mind one feels knowing that he or she is true to Allah and following the Prophet's teachings. When our actions match our words, we feel calm and peace. Hence, when we say we love Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ), and we allow this love to affect our approach to social media, we have a win-win situation. Conversely, when we say we love Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ), and this love has little bearing or no bearing on our social media activities, we have created a mismatch and feelings of hypocrisy can result.

Our approach to social media should be to enrich and advance our worldly lives in preparation for our lives in the Hereafter by using our good health and allotted time in constructive ways, within the boundaries of Islam! Let's strive to cooperate with each other and to contribute to the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in positive ways by avoiding the pitfalls of social media and following the advice put forward to use it correctly!



By Aishah Ahmad

Aishah is a postgraduate chemist pursuing her B.A. in Islamic Studies at IOU where she is the IOU Chat-Info-HelpDesk Officer. Sr. Aishah also serves as the Head of the Islamic Studies Department at Hikmah International School, Bangalore.



Transcending Borders Through Online Education

Cross-border higher education is continuing to gain attention worldwide as an increasing number of students are enrolling in universities abroad for full-time or part-time studies, while others are joining branch campuses of foreign universities in their home countries. Internationalization of higher education is becoming a greater reality today for a number of reasons, including students seeking quality education, along with affordability and accessibility.

The Islamic Online University (IOU) offers a rather rare opportunity to students in this regard since all of its degree, diploma, and certificate programs are available entirely online. Affordability, as well as accessibility, have always been key concerns in the mission of the university. The IOU headquarters are based in the Gambia; however, the student body consists of students from over 200 countries across the globe. It stands as proof that in its more than 10 years of operation, the institution has successfully reached far and wide to offer courses and programs from a variety of disciplines. Furthermore, the global representation of the student body affirms the accessibility

of IOU courses and programs worldwide. With students ranging from across the Sahara desert to the islands of the Pacific Ocean, the global reach indeed testifies that the university is progressing steadily toward transcending borders through online education.

When reflecting upon the reason behind students choosing IOU, it is the hope of receiving a quality education in the comforts of their homes without the need to travel that perhaps attracts most of the students to IOU. As an open university, we not only cater to young high-school graduates, but also to adult learners from different walks of life who are interested in resuming studies at a later stage in life. Many of our students are working to earn their second, or even third degree with us after having previously completed their tertiary education. As a result, many of our students are working professionals from various fields, ranging from medical doctors, engineers, teachers,

lawyers, law enforcement officers, etc. from different countries. One of the main attractions of IOU remains its flagship program, the B.A. in Islamic Studies program; closely followed by programs offered by the different departments, including Education; Psychology; IT; Business Administration; Islamic Banking, Economics and Finance; and Arabic Language and Linguistics.

In general, online education is gradually gaining acceptance as regulations concerning this mode of education are being formulated by the external quality assurance and accreditation bodies in different countries. In addition, cross-border higher education regulations are also being formulated by policymakers at national and international levels. In such a scenario, the Islamic Online University will have the scope to further extend its reach, thus allowing more students to transcend borders through online education.



Did you know?

IOU has a Bachelor's Degree in Education that covers subjects such as

- Classroom Management
- Curriculum Design
- Child Psychology,
- Psychological Controversies,
- Career Counselling

Join the noble career of teaching.

Enroll today!



By Syeda Madeeha Bokhari

Madeeha is the Associate Registrar of IOU. She has a B.Sc. in Computer Engineering, B.A. and M.A. in Islamic Studies from IOU, and she has completed graduate studies in Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education at the University of Melbourne, Australia.



Islamic Online University: A Dream Come True

After embracing Islam in the late 1980s, I served as the local masjid librarian for several years. Charitable organizations used to send us Islamic books and publications for free distribution. Outstanding among those were Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips' works. I read them with intrigue and benefited from them immensely. With a deep sense of appreciation and realization of the benefits to the English-speaking world and potentially great rewards, I made a sincere du'a, saying, "Oh Allah, allow me to benefit the English-speaking world and obtain rewards, as you have allowed this man to do so."

Allah answered the du'a in the most magnificent manner. A year later, He carried us across the world to Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. A few months later, I had the blessed opportunity to begin proofreading and providing feedback for some of Shaykh Dr. Philips' publications.

Manuscripts were delivered to my home, and back then, notes were handwritten in the texts. If I had any inquiries, I contacted Shaykh Riaz Ansari, Dr. Philips' assistant, by phone. He had recently graduated from the University of Madeenah. Until now, I strive to emulate his kind, gentle, scholarly manner which is reminiscent of that described by Ibn Sireen, when he said that "the Salaf used to learn manners as they would learn knowledge." It was Dr. Ansari's recent graduation and coming to the UAE in 1997 that aroused my consciousness and desire

to the possibility of females gaining Islamic Education at the University level. I earnestly hoped and prayed that Allah would make it a reality for me and my Muslim sisters everywhere.

Soon thereafter, I saw a very powerful and impressive dream. I saw Dr. Riaz Ansari and his colleagues in a place where they were in front of us, a group of Muslim sisters, far enough away for us to see them, but they were not able to see us. I sensed that it was a comfortable setting, with a table in front of me, like a cafe or lounge table. While it seemed as if it was partially an outdoor setting, there was some sort of kitchen or cafe to my left, and I and other sisters were indeed getting a university level Islamic education. Alhamdulillah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "If anyone of you has a dream that he likes, then it is from Allah. He should thank Allah for it and narrate it to others". (Bukhari 9/114)

In 2010, my family and I moved to a new home, and soon afterward, I discovered IOU on the Internet. Of course, I was thrilled and enrolled immediately. In the first semester, I took Tafsir

101, which was not actually a first-semester course, but I took it then out of my love for the subject. And Subhanallah, the instructor for that course was none other than Dr. Riaz Ansari, right there on the screen in front of me. Adding to my extreme gratitude to Allah was the fact that He had allowed me to proofread one of the course texts, *Usool at-Tafsir*, so many years ago, in Sharjah, which was now being used by IOU students worldwide, hence, a wonderful source of ongoing charity, sadaqah jariah.

Further amazing is that the setting of our new home is largely as seen in the dream decades before. The kitchen is to the left of my desk area, and to my right, the beautiful outdoors is clearly visible through the large sliding glass door. The den/lounge-like setting is comfortable and private, and I am getting that Islamic University Education. Alhamdulillah.

From my first day at IOU, I realized that this is the ta'weel, 'true occurrence' of my dream from long before. Every time I sit down to study, I cannot help but feel that presence, that ta'weel of the dream. This also



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serves to reinforce to me that Allah is with us all, that this is the Will of Allah for me and all of us, and that we are in a state of well-being from Allah. And, of course, that Allah planned all of this for us long ago. Alhamdulillah.



By Sr. Jameelah Campbell

Jameelah has a B.Sc. in Food, Nutrition, and Institution Management, and she is a Clinical Dietitian/Nutritionist. She has completed the B.A.I.S. and M.A.I.S. Degree programs at IOU. She obtained an Ijazah in Quranic Tajweed and Recitation and currently teaches Ijazah Certification Tajweed courses. She also does proofreading for some IOU modules and texts.

Spreading the Message of Islam in Lagos, Nigeria



Dr. Bilal Philips, IOU's Chancellor, was invited to Nigeria by E-Narrate (ENRADIO) for its annual event named "The Legacy 2.0." Shortly after his arrival, IOU's Chancellor was featured on a live program on ENRADIO where he answered to satisfaction many questions of the listeners.

Four Islamic secondary schools participated in the competition at the E-Narrate event, which attracted over 700 attendees. Dr. Bilal Philips was one of the judges and administrators of the Islamic related questions during the quiz competition, in addition to his nineteen-minute talk about the modern methods of presenting Islamic dawah to the world.

Another amazing lecture was delivered by Dr. Bilal at the Lekki Muslim Community Mosque (LMCM) in Lagos, during which he called on the Muslims to learn more about Islam, abide by its lofty teachings, and invite others to this true Religion. The LMCM management was very thankful to IOU's Chancellor for coming to their mosque and sharing his vast knowledge of Islam with them. One of the members of LMCM's management stated while thanking Dr. Bilal, that he had

benefitted greatly from the IOU Free Diploma program. He revealed that he learned many new things about Islam that he had never heard before in all his years of being Muslim, and he strongly encouraged all those present in the mosque to register and benefit from the Diploma program, which is offered free of charge.

Dr. Bilal also had a workshop entitled "Islamization of Knowledge" for Islamic school teachers in Lagos State at the Penckers Schools. IOU's Chancellor and the IOU team in Nigeria were welcomed to the school by its founder, Dr. Faisal Zugloul. There was an impressive turnout with over two hundred and fifty Islamic school teachers attending the workshop.

In conclusion, Dr. Bilal's short visit to Nigeria contributed significantly to the promotion of IOU and the propagation of Islam in Lagos, Nigeria. We hope to see more and more Nigerians joining the IOU family.

By Akindele Abdullah

Br. Abdullah is IOU's national representative of Nigeria with a B.A. and M.A. in Linguistics.

I Learn So I Can Teach

Since I joined IOU, my life has changed tremendously. In only one semester, I learned so much information that was new to me. The modules are very clear, and the assistant teacher is always patient and makes sure you understand the lesson. Especially Dr. Bilal Philips' courses are very easy to understand, and he makes everything so clear.

Everyone knows that studying requires a lot of hard work, but alhamdulillah, I always feel so motivated to learn more each

and every day. I'm in the 5th semester of B.A.I.S. and I still feel so eager and motivated to learn! The reward of all my studying is that I'm feeling closer to Allah each day, and the more I learn, the more I want to teach.

The Director of the school where I sat my final exams was really curious about the IOU and interested to know more about it. Once he was informed, he praised the University, saying he loves the way the IOU is structured and how the courses are organized.

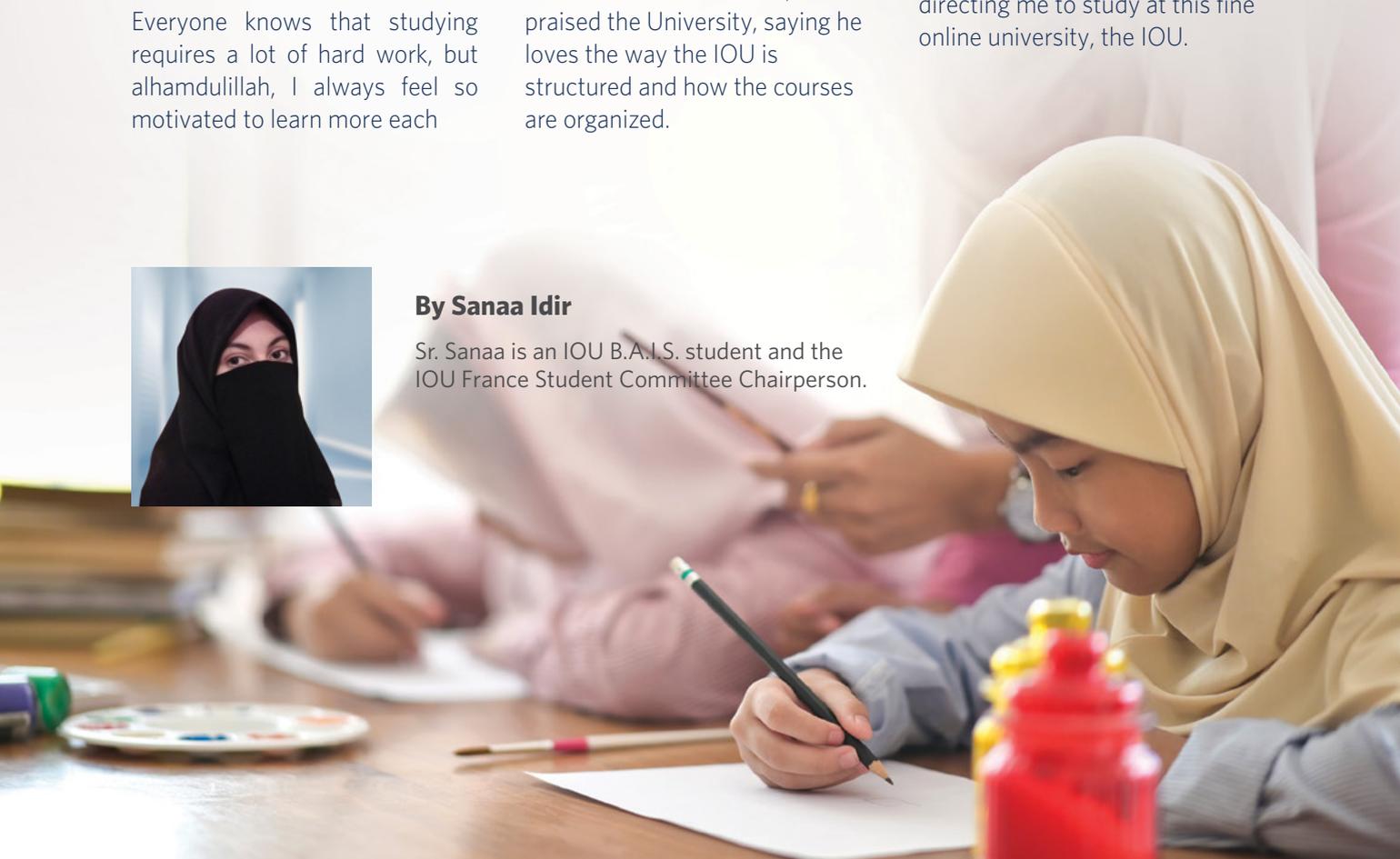
Alhamdulillah, the Director's recognition of IOU as a reputable online university led him to ask me to teach Islamic classes (Aqeedah, Fiqh, Seerah, and Islamic Etiquette) at his school this summer! My dream has come true! I'm spreading the knowledge of what I have already learned and of what I am studying now. Being both a student and a teacher is really challenging. Nevertheless, it helps me be more focused on each lesson I teach, because I want to make sure that I am conveying the knowledge Allah granted me through IOU correctly to my pupils.

We all need to be exposed to correct knowledge in order to change nations through education and help future generations advance and prosper. I am extremely happy and thankful to Allah for directing me to study at this fine online university, the IOU.



By Sanaa Idir

Sr. Sanaa is an IOU B.A.I.S. student and the IOU France Student Committee Chairperson.





Break the Shackles

Break the shackles of superstitions,
And let yourself free.

Stay away from innovations,
If Muslims you should be.

Read not Quran only on occasions,
If guided you want to be.

73 sects but just one in Heaven,
May the only be you and me!
Aameen!



By Zulfa Asif Fakhri

Sr. Zulfa is a BMAIS graduate and a teacher at Momin Girls' High School, Bhiwandi, India.

I graduated from IOU at 68

despite my children's persuasion not to study due to my age

My daughter-in-law introduced me to the IOU when I was 63 years old. Now, I'm 68 years old and hold a BA degree in Islamic Studies. Alhamdulillah. Here's my story/experience.

I am Thahira Iqbal, and I belong to the Cutchi Memon Muslim community in India. I was born in Cochin (Kerala) in 1949, and since childhood, I have witnessed several incidents of unfair treatment meted out to Muslim women in the name of Islam. After my children had grown up, I joined a non-governmental organization (NGO), and there met many uneducated Muslim women who neither knew the basic teachings, nor etiquette of Islam.

I felt the reason for this sad state of affairs was lack of proper Islamic knowledge. Hence, I started studying the books of Tafseer of various scholars in addition to studying

Arabic, books One and Two, written by qualified scholars by myself. I decided to write down the material I was learning and to explain the religion in simple language to enable access and exposure to those less fortunate than myself to these valuable authentic books. During this time, my husband became ill and bedridden, so I had to attend to him around the clock. I felt like I was under house arrest, and yet I did not give up the hope of continuing my studies.

I am narrating this to you all, so that if you find yourselves in a similar situation, you will be patient and hopeful. As we all face difficulties in life from time to time, let us always remember to NEVER LOSE HOPE. With the knowledge that everything Allah does, He does it with a purpose, He knows what we as human beings do not and cannot know. Therefore, our duty is to be patient, and to persevere, striving

in Allah's cause. He will surely

“

The four-year, eight-semester course was a very long journey. I also had to face and deal with my own health problems.”

reward us if we are truly sincere and patient.

In 2010, I wrote my first book on family life entitled: "Eternal Guidance to Peace." Our khateeb of Anjuman Fayez Alam recommended it to the audience during a Bayaan, and said it was essential for everyone to have such a book of guidance in their home. Yet, I felt there was something lacking in my literature. I was not fully satisfied, and I had many nagging doubts about many Islamic law related issues.



It was at that time that I found out that my younger daughter-in-law in Kuwait, was taking an online B.A. course at IOU. I felt compelled to pursue this method of study.

And even though, initially, my children tried to dissuade me because of my age (63), I was adamant about continuing my studies. I felt an earnest need to learn more about Islam that had to be fulfilled. So I began my online studies with the IOU struggling every step of the way.

The four-year, eight-semester course was a very long journey. I also had to face and deal with my own health problems. Yet, I continually prayed to Allah for His help to allow me to complete what I had started. His Help was always there and

my children gave me their full support as well.

I am now glad that I have achieved—NO—Allah has helped me pass the finals and get the B.A. degree in an Islamic program, with an overall average of 80.9%, at the age of 68.

The main benefit I obtained from studying at IOU was not to blindly believe what anybody says, and to do the necessary research to find correct answers, and in this way further my Islamic knowledge.

Today I feel that the knowledge acquired from B.A.I.S. has given me a better understanding of how to understand others; to understand their mental distress so as to better counsel them. It was IOU which guided me, and taught me how to make

“

I would recommend IOU to the younger generation, so they too can benefit from the great treasure that Dr. Bilal Philips and IOU are offering, in the various courses in Islamic studies. ”

references, mention the sources of references, and how to write them up properly.

I have always been told that one can only gain correct Islamic knowledge by studying with/under a qualified Islamic teacher. I found this to be true after joining IOU. Special thanks to Dr. Bilal Philips for his tireless toiling, and I pray for his

long life and health to pursue his work. May you and your faculty gain Allah's pleasure, in your attempt to enlighten the Muslim Ummah.

I would recommend IOU to the younger generation, so they too can benefit from the great treasure that Dr. Bilal Philips and IOU are offering, in the various courses in Islamic studies.

Alhamdulillah, my example of studying as an older student has encouraged many housewives and Islamic-minded teachers. They have joined the above course feeling confident that if I was able to complete it at 68 years old, they should be able to do it also with Allah's help.

My advice to my Muslim sisters and brothers is to use the abilities Allah has given you fully. It's never too late to learn. Allah encourages us to contemplate and learn in many verses of the Quran. He says: "Have you not traveled through the earth and pondered over the various creations of Allah?" Today, Islamic knowledge is readily available at our fingertips in the form of online courses.

The learning environment and experience are far more rewarding and satisfying when you learn from highly educated Muslims, rather than learning from books by yourself on your own. Also, whenever anyone learns from a prestigious scholar, it is much better, and gives one more knowledge, more confidence and satisfaction, as opposed to learning by oneself. And I have found that IOU has the best Online faculty providing correct Islamic knowledge and guidance, and gives ordinary Muslims an opportunity to learn from well-educated Muslim professors.

It allows us, Muslims, to study and learn at our own pace and convenience by giving us, its students, choices: whether to study as few as two subjects per semester, or more if we so desire. This enables us to manage and complete courses according to our own particular schedules.

Nothing worth struggling for comes easy, and Allah will surely reward us for all our efforts when we strive in His way. May Allah Ta'ala guide all of us towards and along the straight path in His Deen.



“

Don't wait for someone else to come into your life to change it. **Change it yourself!** Put your trust in Allah and be the change YOU want to see!

”



By Thahira Iqbal

Sr. Thahira is a B.A. in Islamic Studies graduate and a published author.

Has Information Technology Really Made the World a Better Place?

Information Technology (IT) is the use of computers to store, retrieve, transmit, and manipulate data or information, often in the context of a business or other enterprise. IT is considered to be a subset of information and computer technology. It has provided its users with an abundance of useful information that readily enhances their daily lives. Starting from the time we begin our day with Fajr prayer with the alarm set on our mobile phones, to the knowledge we gain in our schools—all this information is reforming and evolving as we speak, and is a direct result from our interaction with the various IT applications.

IT is advantageous in many ways. The following are recognized benefits:



Enhanced innovations:

Information technology has given wings to the development of new ideas and business approaches/methods. It has created tremendous job opportunities for technology companies. With access to computers and the Internet, ordinary people can start up a small business and expand it successfully from the comfort of their homes. The well-known examples of business ideas that began from home are Google, Amazon, and Bing.



Fast Accessible knowledge:

Technology, accompanied by global knowledge for all to share faster, has brought the global community closer. With the help of IT applications, we can be eyewitnesses to any event happening in any part of the world from our homes on our televisions, computers, or mobile devices. Websites, like Wikipedia, have the latest information on almost every subject one can think of.



Education anywhere:

Education is now easier to access and faster to acquire. This quality has become very useful for students living in underdeveloped countries who can now study the subjects they want with the hope that in the future, they can compete for well-paying jobs.



Innovative educational methods:

There are various types of innovative methods of education that have been developed. Easy and fun ways of educating students using puzzles, videos, and interactive games to help them better understand abstract concepts. Research shows that students studying with the help of educational games and technology perform better than those students who do not have them. Many learning societies focused on educational innovation provide their students with free Internet connections in classrooms and on campuses so that students can start learning what they like whenever they want and are not totally dependent on the teachers to satisfy their thirst for knowledge.



Saving time:

IT has made previously lengthy processes faster and more efficient, and that has helped us in many industries such as industrial production, which is now faster due to the automated machines and sensors.



Better communication:

Technology has shown remarkable growth in this particular area with services like phone, electronic mail, video conferencing, and faxes to name a few. This service has made transportation of information very easy, and it has also aided a lot in sharing information among coworkers, which has become very efficient. With just one click, we can now send documents far and wide to many persons via things like e-mail, fax, text messages, without having to wait for weeks to get it delivered by the post.



Enhanced communal interaction:

Keeping in touch with family has become easy with the help of ever developing social media. Services like Twitter, Facebook, Skype, WhatsApp, etc., are very well-known.



Enhanced storage and management:

Businesses require a lot of data to be stored, and this is where technology comes to the rescue. Cloud hosting is used to store and backup data. There are services like Dropbox, Google cloud, and Amazon cloud, that provide enough space to store and easily retrieve data and information when needed. It is very well organized, and can be used by non-technical people with ease. Data storage is very important for business purposes. Hence, its safety must be retained and assured continuously.



Easy bookkeeping:

Businessmen with minor technical knowledge can easily manage their accounts with the help of applications like Quick Books, Book Keeper, and Microsoft Excel. A number and variety of accounting processes can be carried out effectively without any calculation errors. Tutorials on how to use these products are available online and also in the help section of each application.



Improved communication between retailer and consumer:

By making use of communication technology, retailers can communicate easily with consumers and receive their direct feedback on the purchased items. This creates awareness among the manufacturers of the product, and with this

additional knowledge, they can readily improve their products. It also helps in gaining new consumers and expanding the market.

Surely IT has benefited us greatly, but nothing is free of flaws. IT has made this world a better place in many ways, but it has brought some dark elements as well.

There are various disadvantages of this ever growing IT like cybersickness where people become addicted to the games. Also, social networking has a strong grasp on people's minds, where they become fully engaged in it spending many hours in front of the computer. Furthermore, students' minds become slow when trying to solve problems when they know that they can just find the solutions over the search engine. Information provided on Internet Wikipedia is written and contributed by lay people; hence, there is a chance that sometimes the received information is wrong, or not completely reliable.

Even though we have seen that IT has many advantages and a few disadvantages, it is our responsibility to advance and embrace the good aspects, and to avoid the evil aspects related to it. May Allah help us distinguish the disadvantageous aspects, from its various positive elements, and accept our efforts to help bolster the future of IT here and in the hereafter. Ameen. Truly, Allah knows what is best for human development and advancement.



By Mateeba Quazi

Sr. Mateeba is an IOU B.Sc.I.T. student with an interest in coding.

The Internet of Things (IoT)

Are You Safe?

In today's IT and business world, IoT has become a very common term, which basically refers to objects that are embedded with computing hardware that is capable of monitoring, collecting, sending and receiving data, and in some cases, performing directives based on the data collected or received. These IoT devices have a wide range of applications; smart farming, smart homes, wearables, connected cars, connected healthcare, etc.

Let's look at the smart home for example. A person may forget to turn off the electric stove when leaving the house. Thereafter, the device immediately sends a notification about this oversight after he or she leaves the house in order to proceed with the necessary action. This can also be done remotely if enabled at home.

We also know that sending and receiving data over a network always presents security risks that may be very harmful when someone gains illegal access to the device or data is being exchanged. As such, this article focuses on some important security issues that IoT device users should be aware of, and suggests some solutions.

Whenever data is being transferred, it is very important for it to be encrypted. Encrypting can be compared to a covering that protects it from unauthorized access. Unfortunately, most of these IoT devices do not have a method of encrypting data while transmitting from one point to another. Solutions to the encrypting issue are being examined to ensure all transmitted data has lightweight encryption, which will require authentication to access transmitted data. This will simultaneously improve its integrity and the confidentiality of the data.

User interfaces are also very important, as they provide the link between a user and a machine or a device. Without it, a machine or a device will be useless. Most IoT devices are controlled through a web interface. This raises some concerns, such as a user having weak passwords, the user's credentials being exposed in network traffic, and no account lockout settings. Possible solutions to these issues are all users having strong passwords, which consist of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and symbols, protecting users' credentials from being exposed in the network traffic, and

“Whenever data is being transferred, it is very important for it to be encrypted. Encrypting can be compared to a covering that protects it from unauthorized access.”

locking out a user after a certain number of failed attempts.

Security of the network services to which these IoT devices are connected is also of vital concern, because the more insecure it is, the easier it will be for unauthorized access into the network. These can come in different forms, such as open network ports and services. This can be tackled by ensuring that only the ports required by the IoT device are active and checking frequently those services in the network prone to vulnerability attacks.

Finally, we look at the aspect of security configurability which are the settings that most

IoT devices do not possess. But whenever a user owns a device, there is the need for customizable configuration of how the device interacts with the network. These settings would include the port control, IP based access settings, logging of security events, and notifying users of all these security activities.

Some of these security issues have created undue fear in the minds of IoT user. However, with all the forthcoming solutions, it seems safe to say that IoT has a bright, promising future in the growing field of IT.

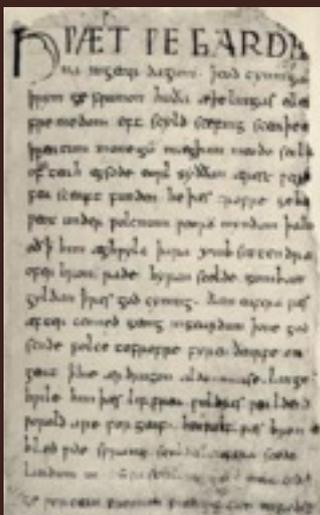


By Ibrahim Isa

Br. Ibrahim, based in Kaduna, Nigeria, has a B.Eng. in Electrical Engineering. At IOU, he is a Web developer and teaches some IOU courses. Furthermore, he is a researcher in the field of Telecommunications at UKZN. He is passionate about programming, computing, telecoms, electronics, and working for the progress of Islam.

How Allah Has Preserved the Arabic Language

Let us suppose that you are a 20th-century student of Arabic, quite proficient in classical Arabic (Fushah) or modern classical written Arabic, and you want some more context or clearer explanation behind a verse in the Quran; so you simply open up Tafsir al-Tabari and find your answers. Amazing! You, as an Arabic student in 2019, can understand Tafsir al-Tabari, an exegesis of the Quran, written in the year 883! The fact that people who study modern formal Arabic can understand a text over 1000 years old is extraordinary. The fact that Arabic has remained practically unchanged over such a long period gives credence to its superior status compared to other languages.



To see just how incredible this is, let us examine an English text written approximately around the same period. The following is an excerpt from Beowulf and an example of Old English.

**Hræt! pē Gār-Dena in ġeār-dagum,
þēod-cyninga, þrym ġefrūnon,
hū ðā æpelingas ellen fremedon.
Oft Scyld Scēfing sceaþena þrēatum,**

— 8th Century Poem, Beowulf in Old English

If you focus on the words long enough you can make out slight connections.

Why has the English language changed so drastically?

The Great Vowel Shift caused the English language to look and sound quite different. The effect was that the English sounds and grammar went through major changes, where all middle English long vowels changed in their pronunciation. Some consonants were affected by the shift as well.

'Meat' was pronounced more like 'mat,' 'bite' sounded like 'beat' and 'out' was 'oot.'

An example of a grammar change:

If you want to see noticeable differences in grammar you only need to look at this line taken from the Shakespearean (17th century) play, "Romeo and Juliet."

Romeo & Juliet

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

What do you think the above line means? The sentence doesn't mean 'Where are you, Romeo?' like most people assume. 'Wherefore' meant 'what is the purpose of?' So this line loosely

means, 'O Romeo, Romeo, what is the purpose of your being Romeo?' or 'Why are you Romeo?'

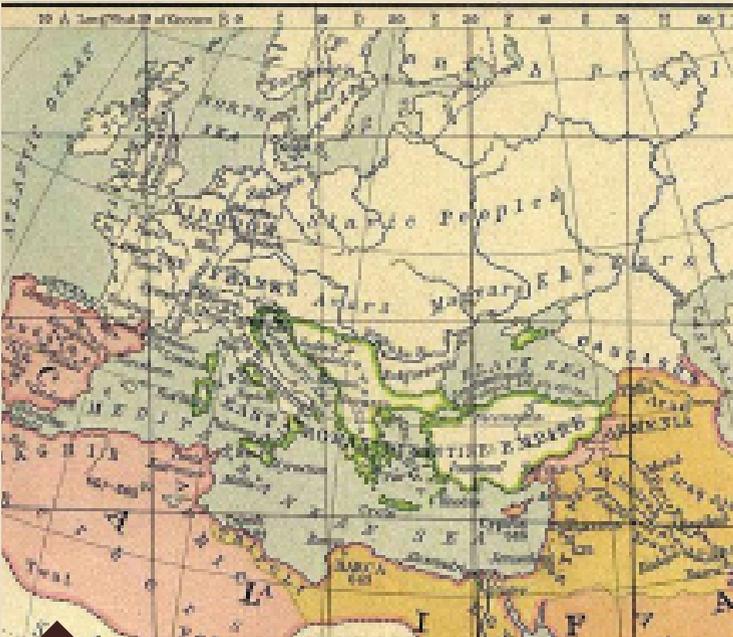
This is only one of many examples. But if we compare English to most other languages, we see a similar pattern over time: they change (constantly, evolving into versions of their original scripts, and many languages even die.)

So what is the main factor that contributed to the preservation of the Arabic language and kept Arabic from changing? The definitive primary answer: **The Quran.**



An important secondary factor: During the time the Quran was being revealed to Muhammad ﷺ (610 -632CE), there were different dialects being spoken. The Quran was eventually revealed in different dialects. But only the dialect of the Quraish was preserved during the reign of the third caliph, Uthman, in the 7th century CE. From that moment onward, the Arabic of the Quran spread out to the world—to Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Africa, and even as far as Spain.

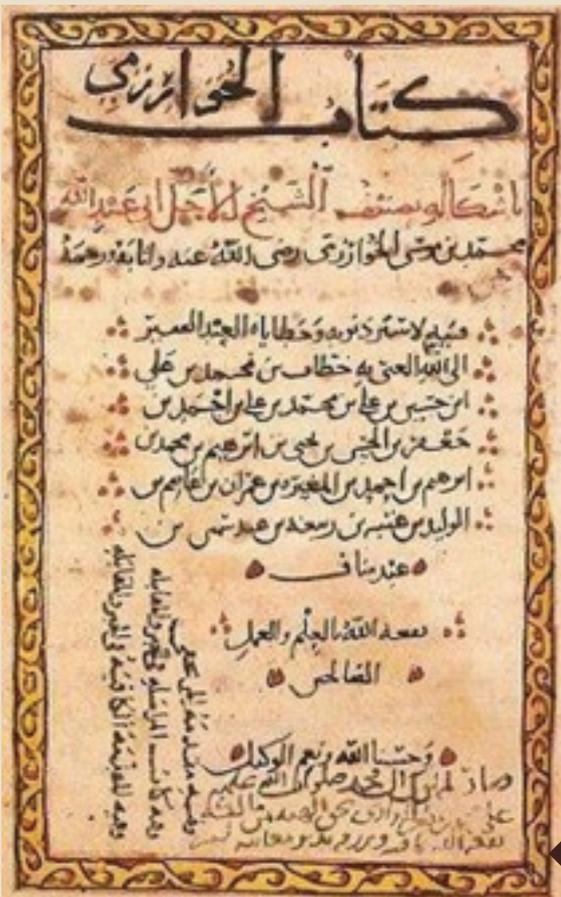




"The Caliphate in 750." From The Historical Atlas by William R. Shepherd, 1926

The Umayyad Period (661-750CE)

Arabic was the official language of the new Islamic empire. But with a large number of non-Arab people now learning it, they started making mistakes in the pronunciation of the Quran. The Arabs worried about the preservation of the purity of the Quran, and therefore introduced the system of dots and vowel marks to the script to help read Arabic and by extension the Quran correctly. Even nowadays, non-Arab Muslims work extensively on their pronunciation of the Arabic alphabet to perfect their Quranic recitation.



The Abbasid Period (750-1517CE)

By now, the Islamic Empire was in its "golden age." There was a revolution in all aspects of knowledge, science, and art. Arabic was the language of the learned. Books of knowledge were translated into Arabic from different languages. For instance, the caliph, Al-Mansur, ordered that literature be translated into Arabic. Under al-Mansur's orders, books written in Greek, Syriac, and Persian were then translated into Arabic. The Syriac and Persian books were translations from the original Greek or Sanskrit texts. (1)

A Page From Al- Khawarizmi's Al-Kitāb al-muḥtaṣar fī ḥisāb al-ġabr wa-l-muqābala From Which Modern Algebra Got Its Name. Via Wikimedia Commons

It is also worth noting here that, if not for the strict preservation of the Arabic language, many important classical works would have been lost. For example, most of Aristotle works have been recovered from Arabic translations.

العربية

The Islamic Online University presents an outstanding 4-year program, Bachelor of Arts in Arabic Language and Linguistics,

designed to teach students the classical Arabic language in an easy manner, coupled with the usage of words and phrases that are part of daily life. This program, prepared by more than fifty professors and experts of the Arabic language who teach Arabic to non-Arabic speaking students, is based on courses that are taught at the Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



The spoken dialects were different by then between Syria, Iraq, and Madinah, and so on. But the high esteem in which Muslims held the Quran and Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) meant that the pure original version of Arabic was the one preserved and always taught and used in educational and instructive settings.

The eye according to Hunayn ibn Ishaq C 1200 via Wikimedia Commons.

The Challenges Arabic Faced

After the 14th century, the Islamic Empire was greatly divided and severely weakened. It was now split into different smaller kingdoms, and large parts of it were conquered and controlled by foreign rulers. Ibn Khaldun says about this, "When non-Arabs—such as the Daylam, and, after them, the Seljuqs in the East, and the Zanitah, and Berbers in the West—became the rulers and obtained royal authority and control over the whole Muslim realm, the Arabic language suffered corruption. It would almost have disappeared, if the concern of the Muslims with the Quran and the Sunnah, which preserve Islam, had not (also) preserved the Arabic language."(2)

Then came the onslaught of the Mongols. Ibn Khaldun says, "But when the Tatars and Mongols, who were not Muslims, became the rulers in the East, this element in favor of the Arabic language disappeared, and the Arabic language was absolutely doomed. No trace of it has remained in these Muslim provinces: Iraq, Khurasan, the country of Furs (southern Persia), Eastern and Western India, Transoxania, the Northern countries, and the Byzantine territory (Anatolia). The Arabic methods (uslub) of poetry and speech have disappeared, save for a (remnant). Instruction in (what little Arabic is known) is a technical matter using rules learned from the sciences of the Arabs and through memorizing their speech. It is restricted to those persons whom God has equipped for it. The sedentary Arabic dialect has largely remained in Egypt, Syria, Spain, and the Maghreb, because Islam still remains (there) and requires it. Thus, it has been preserved to some degree. But in the provinces of the Iraq and beyond to the East, no trace or source of the Arabic language has remained. Even scientific books have come to be written in the non-Arabic (Persian) language, which is also used for instruction in Arabic in class."(3)

Finally, with the fall of Granada, the last foothold of the Arab Islamic Empire in Spain, known as Al-Andalus in the Islamic world, the Arabic language was replaced. Initially, Arabic was the official language of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Thereafter, the official language of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922) became Turkish.

But amazingly, Arabic has survived all these challenges, because it always had a fortress to return to in the times of turmoil.

Classical Arabic had always been the language used and taught in the circles of Quranic learning, in the masajid (mosques), schools, and universities. It was used to discuss important fields of Islamic knowledge such as Fiqh, Tafsir, and Hadith. The pronunciation was always meticulously taught exactly as it had been at the time of the Prophet ﷺ

Allah, the One who never breaks His vows nor promises, states in the Quran,

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Quran and indeed, We will be its guardian." (Quran, 15:9)

The Quran could not truly be protected and preserved unless the Arabic language, in which it was revealed, was preserved. Otherwise, its meaning cannot be fully grasped by the reader. It would have been inaccessible. And we see the fulfillment of this promise when we look back throughout history.

Sources:

1. O'Leary, De Lacy (1922), Arabic Thought and its Place in History, P 107. (From Wikipedia article: 'Transmission of the Greek Classics')
2. Ibn Khaldun, Al-Muqaddimah, (Translated by Franz Rosenthal), P 477.
3. Same source, page 477-478.
4. Religions Philip Wilkinson, Pp.128, 132



By Abdul Aleem

Br. Abdul Aleem is a graduate from the Quran and Sunnah Degree Programme from the International Islamic University of Malaysia, and currently pursuing a Master's degree in Fiqh from Medina International Islamic University, KL. Fascinated by the Arabic language, he is the founder of the fluentarabic.net blog.

IOU's Diploma Section: Arabic Language Courses

Being the language of the Noble Quran, it is really important for every Muslim to learn the Arabic language. As its main priority, the Islamic Online University (IOU) offers five Arabic language courses in its Diploma Section. The courses are designed for English speakers who do not speak the Arabic language, and also for those who have little knowledge about the Arabic language and its linguistics. A student can start any Arabic language course at any time at their convenience. However, it is recommended to start with the Level One Arabic language course, and then to continue with the higher levels of studying the language. Each Arabic language course includes videos, audios, and PDF materials [Books, Booklets and/or Pamphlets]. The student will, insha'Allah, make progress on a steady basis through IOU's levels of Arabic language learning.



The IOU's Diploma Section Arabic language courses are listed below according to study level, starting with ARS 100 as the first level:

- Arabic Speech Simplified! (ARS 100)
- Arabic Reading and Writing Made Easy (ARB 011)
- Introduction to Quranic Arabic - Level 1 (ARB 031)
- Introduction to Quranic Arabic - Level 2 (ARB 032)
- Introduction to Quranic Arabic - Level 3 (ARB 033)

Arabic Speech Simplified! (ARS 100)

This course has been devised for the students who wish to take up extensive Arabic studies. It covers the Arabic language and its basics. The student will enter the exciting world of Arabic and will discover a new language and culture, while broadening their horizons. The student will enjoy discovering the language of Islam.

(Reference: ARS 100 from IOU Special Workshops)

We anticipate developing an intermediate course as a bridge between ARS 100 and ARB 011.

Lecturer & Instructor:

Shaykh Mukhtar Raban

Teacher:

Noha Foad A | Facilitator 29 | IOU
Diploma Head of Arabic

Arabic Reading and Writing Made Easy (ARB 011)

ARB 011 is aimed at teaching the basics of Arabic reading and writing to students with little or no background in Arabic. The course is uniquely structured so that the student does not need to memorize all 28 letters in the Arabic alphabet, 112 vowel variations before learning to read and write. It builds on the older ARB 011 Diploma course with new dynamic videos and simpler testing methodology.

The course focuses on teaching proper articulation of all Arabic letters and vowels, so that even beginner students can recite the Quran correctly. In each module, students will be given adequate time and training to read and write practice words, in addition to examples from the Noble Quran. (Reference: ARB 011 from Diploma Program: level 1)

Lecturer & Instructor:

Masood Ahmed Ranginwala

Teacher:

Noha Foad A | Facilitator 29 | IOU
Diploma Head of Arabic

Introduction to Quranic Arabic - Level 1 (ARB 031)

The goal of this course is to teach the student the fundamentals of Quranic Arabic and its grammar. The comprehension and understanding of the lofty language of Allah is the ultimate goal. The only requirement is that the student should have basic Arabic reading skills (i.e. they should be able to read the Quran). There is little focus on conversational Arabic, which is left aside for later study. Instead, there is a keen focus on the grammar and vocabulary of the Quran. The goal of reading comprehension of the Quran (and ultimately listening comprehension) overshadows everything else relative to Arabic learning.

ARB 031, or Level 1 starts from analyzing the basic Arabic word, then word constructions,

and then finally sentences. Level 2 (ARB032) focuses on verbs, verbal sentences, and verb families. The course avoids technical Arabic grammar terminology when possible and clarifies challenging grammar concepts in simplified and clear examples. Lectures are filled with numerous examples taken directly from the Quran. Overall, the essentials of Quranic language are taught in the stepwise and methodical manner, so that the student can learn thoroughly, efficiently, and easily.

Altogether, the student who successfully completes Introduction to Quranic Arabic, Levels 1 and 2 should gain the ability of basic Quranic reading comprehension (with the help of a Dictionary). Furthermore, the student should also be able to translate Hadith and Classical Arabic literature at a basic level. Nonetheless, these students should continue to learn and develop their Arabic skills and take the higher-level Intermediate Quranic Arabic course. (Reference: ARB 031 from Diploma Program: level 6)

Lecturer & Instructor:

Masood Ahmed Ranginwala

Teacher:

Noha Foad A | Facilitator 29 | IOU
Diploma Head of Arabic

Introduction to Quranic Arabic - Level 2 (ARB 032)

This course series focuses on teaching essential Quranic Arabic grammar alongside high-yield vocabulary from the Quran. Thus, this course is different from most Arabic courses, since it focuses primarily on Quranic Arabic, and teaches grammar through the Quran. And also for that reason, there is little focus on conversational Arabic. The goal of reading comprehension of the Quran (and ultimately listening comprehension) overshadows everything else relative to learning Arabic. Hence, there is a gradual progression in teaching the student the fundamental aspects of Quranic Grammar alongside Quranic Vocabulary. Each lesson

comes with several examples directly taken from the Quran. Furthermore, at the end of each chapter, there are questions testing the student's mastery of the material, most derived directly from the Quran.

The prerequisite to this Level 2 Course is ARB031 which focuses on teaching the grammar of Arabic words, word constructions, and Nominal (non-verbal) sentences. This Level 2 Course focuses on Verbs and Verbal Sentences. Therefore, the student who completes Introduction to Quranic Arabic, Levels 1, 2, and 3 successfully should, insha'Allah, gain the ability of basic Quranic reading comprehension (with the help of a Dictionary). Furthermore, the student should also be able to translate Hadith and Classical Arabic literature at a basic level. The Level 3 Course focuses primarily on higher verb families. (Reference: ARB 032 from Diploma Program: level 6)

Lecturer & Instructor:

Masood Ahmed Ranginwala

Teacher:

Noha Foad A | Facilitator 29 | IOU
Diploma Head of Arabic

Introduction to Quranic Arabic - Level 3 (ARB 033)

This last level of the series on Introductory Quranic Arabic Level 3 focuses on the higher verb families alongside with basic grammatical analysis of Quranic verses. It incorporates essential Arabic grammar principles from the two prerequisites—ARB031 and ARB032 courses. Hence, the student who completes this Quranic Arabic course series should, insha'Allah, be able to have basic Quranic reading comprehension (with the help of a Dictionary). They should also be able to translate Hadith and Classical Arabic literature at an elementary level. We hope to continue a higher course series on Intermediate Quranic grammar. This course is a first important step to learning the language of the Quran. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this course series will open new doors for the student of knowledge, and increase the connection with Allah's book and His sacred knowledge. (Reference: ARB 033 from Diploma Program: level 6)

Insha'Allah, with the creation of any additional Arabic Language Course, there will be a notification regarding this.



By Noha Mohammed Mohammed Foad Amin

Sr. Noha is the Head of the Arabic department at IOU General Diploma in Islamic Studies (GDIS) and also its Facilitator.

Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) said:
“Learn Arabic, for it strengthens the intelligence and increases one's noble conduct.”

Source: Al-Bayhaqī, Shu'ab Al-Īmān Vol.4 p187.



Means of
Protecting Oneself
from
Deviations in
Aqeedah

PART 1



The Muslim Ummah has been infected with beliefs that contradict the authentic teachings of Islam. Unfortunately, most of the times, these beliefs are presented in such a way that we do not even think about examining their authenticity. We accept them as they come and implement them in our lives. We have the best intentions in our hearts yet remain ignorant of their actual harm. Our creed is the base of our beliefs. If it is correct, the rest will, by the will of Allah, also be correct. Hence, it is extremely important that we recognize deviations in Aqeedah, and especially those that try to imitate the correct belief while causing great destruction to your faith. There are several ways and means a Muslim can avoid deviation in Aqeedah. The following are the best-prescribed ones.



This path teaches a Muslim how to avoid the paths of innovation and misguidance. The proof for this is Allah's statement: "And, [moreover], this is My path, which is Straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous." [al-An'aam: 153].

He also said: "Follow, [O mankind], what has been revealed to you from your Lord and do not follow other than Him any allies. Little do you remember." [al-A'raaf: 3].

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Verily he among you who lives long will see great controversy, so you must keep to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the rightly guided caliphs, those who guide to the right way. Cling to it stubbornly. Beware of newly invented matters [in the religion], for verily every bid'ah (innovation) is misguidance." [Transmitted by Abu Dawud and at-Tirmithi].

Some Successful Models

A Muslim can attain salvation by following a path based on the methodology of the Prophet (ﷺ). This path, full of guidance and wisdom, was followed by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) himself and his righteous companions.



Avoiding the Callers of Misguidance and the Leaders of Misguidance

A person may compromise his faith and morals by associating with the people of innovation and misguidance or learning from them. Avoiding these people ensures that a Muslim's Aqeedah is safe.

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated: "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) recited the verse: 'It is He who has sent down to you the Book. In it are Verses that are entirely clear, they are the foundation of the Book, others not entirely clear. So as for those in whose hearts there is a deviation (from the Truth), follow thereof that is not entirely clear seeking affliction and searching

for its hidden meanings; but no one knows its hidden meanings but Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: 'We believe in it (i.e. in the Quran) the whole of it (i.e. its clear and unclear verses) are from our Lord. And none receive admonition except men of understanding.'" (Al-'Imraan: 7) Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "If you see those who follow thereof that is not entirely clear, then they are those whom Allah has named [as having deviation (from the Truth)] So beware of them." [Transmitted by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: "In the end of time there will be charlatan liars coming to you with narrations that neither you nor your fathers have heard. So, beware of them lest

they misguide you, and cause you to be afflicted by tribulations." [Transmitted by Muslim].

The hadith of Dajjal, who is one of the most dangerous callers to evil and a serious charlatan, strongly supports the principle that people of innovation and misguidance are to be strictly avoided.

'Imran ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Let him who hears of the Dajjal go far from him for I swear by Allah that a man will come to him thinking he is a believer and follow him because of confused ideas aroused in him by him." [Transmitted by Abu Dawud].



Seeking Islamic Knowledge from Trustworthy Scholars who follow the Methodology of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Knowledge is the criterion, or deciding factor, between truth and falsehood. When a knowledgeable person fully comprehends all aspects of the true Aqeedah and what negates it, such a person is able to safeguard his or her faith. Many religious texts command Muslims to seek knowledge, such as the following:

Allah the Exalted said: "So know, [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah" [Muhammad: 19]. He also said: "So ask the knowledgeable people if you do not know" [an-Nahl: 43]. Moreover, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When Allah wishes good for anyone, He bestows upon him the Fiqh (comprehension) of the religion." [Transmitted by al-Bukhari and Muslim]. The scholars stated that the opposite meaning of this hadith is that if Allah does not wish goodness for a person, He does not grant him the understanding of religion.



By Shaibu Asali

Br. Shaibu is a Researcher at the Islamic Online University and a Zimbabwe-based caller to Islam. He has a B.A. in Shariah from the Medina Islamic University and an M.A. in Fiqh from the Hamad bin Khalifa University in Qatar.

IOU Experience:

A Student's Perspective

I recently graduated from the IOU with a B.A. in Islamic Studies. IOU is a great platform for studying authentic Islamic knowledge from qualified faculty members using some of the best books written on these subjects without the need to relocate or commute. In comparison to more traditional ways of studying, IOU has been a forerunner in taking advantage of modern technology. However, as with any method of learning, there are positive and negative aspects of the study experience. I would like to share with you my full experience as a student of IOU's online undergraduate program.

The University has many positive aspects from the B. A. I. S. student's perspective. I would like to mention those that have had the greatest impact on my online experience.



Flexibility



Variety of Subjects

The B.A.I.S. degree course is completely online, which means that you can study from anywhere in the world, any time of the day or night when you have time and an Internet connection, but you have to go to an IOU registered exam center for your final exams. I have done my final exams in three different countries: Canada, USA, and Pakistan! I believe most major cities around the world have registered IOU exam centers. This flexibility was particularly useful to me, because I had to relocate several times during the course of my studies. Furthermore, because of the global nature of the institution, I have come to know students from various parts of the world.

The B.A. in Islamic Studies at IOU is based on a very well-designed curriculum for a well-rounded foundation in Islamic Studies. It uses some of the same curricula as the famous Islamic universities in the Muslim world. The subject that had the greatest impact on my life was Islamic Psychology. It covered some of the most eye-opening revelations for me personally.



Materials Quality Books and Material



Amazing Professors from Varied Backgrounds



Free

All the books and study materials are available to the students enrolled in IOU courses for FREE. Supplemental texts are also available from the online library for IOU students. There are more than enough books on every subject. There are many books, which contain a wealth of beneficial knowledge—my favorites were the books by Sheikh Jamaluddin Zarabozo on the Explanation of the Forty Ahadith of Imam An-Nawawi.

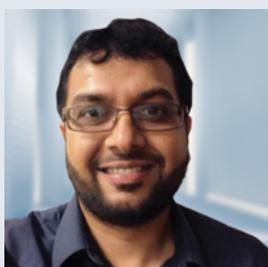
The faculty at IOU have various backgrounds just like any other reputable university. A number of the professors are graduates of the Islamic University of Madinah in Saudi Arabia and hold post-graduate or doctorate degrees. This is without a doubt one of the most important factors to look for in an educational institution.

The courses are all FREE for everyone. There is, however, a flat administration fee for each semester, which is based on an economic index scale (meaning this fee is dependent upon the region in which the student resides). This enables students from poorer countries to participate with a lower cost. I found the fees to be very reasonable, alhamdulillah.

As with any distance/online education, there are disadvantages which reflect this type of learning mainly in physical student interaction. Nevertheless, those students that long for study-partners and meeting other students, may want to consider contacting their local student committees or participate in the annual IOU Awareness Day.

On careful examination of the advantages and disadvantages above, one can easily recognize that IOU represents a great opportunity for literally anyone on the planet to acquire authentic

Islamic education right from the comfort of his/her home as long as an Internet connection is available. The flexibility and the quality of education offered by IOU alone are enough to outweigh any negatives. The main negative point stems from the fact that the university operates solely online in order to have a global reach, and therefore is not limited to one geographical location. Consequently, the physical personal interaction between students and faculty experienced at regular universities is missing. Nevertheless, in spite of this drawback, overall, the IOU continues to play an invaluable role in the Muslim Ummah.



By Umair Abdus Salam

Br. Umair holds a B.A. in Islamic Studies and is currently pursuing an M.A. in Islamic Studies from the IOU. He also has a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and is a Software Consultant by profession. He can be reached at www.umairsalam.com.

Top 10 Reasons to Opt for an Online Education

1. Availability
2. Affordability
3. Flexibility
4. Global collaboration
5. The fastest way to learn new technologies
6. A lot of choices for online courses
7. Easier to acquire marketable skills
8. Introverts, stay-at-home moms, and, in some cases, even prisoners can study
9. Great use of new technology
10. Continuous acquisition of knowledge long after college



The Close Connection between Spirituality & Physical Health

Many of us are well aware of the secular ways of keeping healthy and fit but are unaware of some of the Islamic rules and principles for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

As Muslims, we should allow our religious life to regulate and beautify our worldly existence and not see our “Deen” and “dunya” as separate entities. So, even in terms of maintaining a strong and healthy physique, Islam teaches us the best methods to maintain it, and encourages us through divine guidance, thereby equipping us with the best knowledge in healthy eating, sleeping patterns, and the effect of worship on the body and soul.

When we become practicing Muslims, the majority of our health issues will fall into place; as practicing

Islam correctly refines the soul, controls the nafs (one’s self), soothes our mind, and helps to maintain moderation in all our daily habits. Thus, we can experience a holistic approach to ‘good health.’ In fact, many health problems are caused by transgressing Islamic principles and lacking spirituality. Good health is not just absence of disease, but also the attainment of a happy, peaceful attitude. Even the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” To understand and attain this, we have two important sources—the Quran and Sunnah—to draw our knowledge from.





Now, let us delve into a few of the Islamic perspectives and commands in regard to maintaining a healthy lifestyle according to the Quran and Sunnah:

Importance of healthy food

The Quran and Sunnah direct us to some types of healthy food such as honey, dates, black seed, vinegar, and milk.

Here is one example from the Quran, followed by one example from the hadith literature: "And your Lord inspired the bees, saying: 'Take your habitations in the mountains and in the trees and in what they erect. Then, eat of all fruits, and follow the ways of your Lord made easy (for you).' There comes forth from their (bees) bellies a drink of varying color wherein is healing for men. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think." (al-Nahl 16:68-69)

Evidence from the hadith: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was reported to have said: "'This black seed is a healing for every disease except as-saam.' I said: 'What is as-saam?' He said: 'Death.'" (Al-Bukhari, 5687)

Overeating

In regard to overeating, we have a powerful hadith, which cautions about the dangers and health hazards it can cause.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "No human has ever filled a vessel worse than the stomach. Sufficient for any son of Adam are some morsels to keep his back straight. But if it must be, then one third for his food, one third for his drink, and one third for his breath." (Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, hadith sahih)

This is a reminder to us about the correct amount of food we need and that its purpose is to keep our backs straight, i.e., this amount will ensure that we achieve good health, and therefore are able to fulfill our purpose of worshipping Allah. And when we eat with the intention that consuming this food will give us sufficient energy to help us worship our Lord in the best fashion, then this mundane activity transforms into an act of worship that has physical and spiritual rewards as well.

Fasting

Fasting is another aspect which can help anyone maintain a healthy body. But as Muslims, we have guidelines about fasting. We know the length of time to fast and what activities to avoid during the fast for the maximal physical and spiritual benefit. Also, the intention is an extremely important part of fasting. Allah says in a hadith that fasting is for Him and He will reward it. This takes the Islamic fast to a high spiritual level.

Here are a few examples of the physical benefits of fasting on person's health mentioned by Dr. Zakir Naik:



Weight loss aid

- Benefits the whole digestive system as well as central nervous system
- Removes toxins from the body
- Boosts immune system



Cupping

Islam has given great significance to cupping as one of the best methods used in the past, and even present for treating and curing diseases.

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was treated with cupping by Abu Tayyibah. He (ﷺ) commanded that he (Anas) should be given two measures of food and he spoke with his tax-collectors, who reduced his taxes. He (ﷺ) said, "The best treatment you can use is cupping." (Reported by al-Bukhari, 10/126; Muslim, 1577)

Some of the benefits of cupping mentioned by Sheikh Ibn al-Qayyim are that it helps in treating blood pressure, heart muscle infections, chest diseases, headaches, circulatory diseases, rheumatic pains, etc. (Zaad al-Ma'aad by Ibn al-Qayyim, 4/52) (al-Hijaamah: Ahkaamuha wa Fawaa'iduha by Ibrahim al-Hazimi)

The above-mentioned hadith along with supporting discussion help us to better understand the Islamic perspective on cupping and value it as a powerful means to cure various ailments.



Salah

Apart from its well known spiritual benefits, prayer has curative and physical benefits.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn al-Qayyim in his book, *Zaad al-Ma'aad*, elaborates on the amazing physical benefits Salah offers. A few of them are that Salah casts away illnesses, rids one of laziness, makes the limbs more active, and strengthens body parts and the heart by expelling harmful pollutants from them. (Zaad al-Ma'aad (4/304-305) of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Mu'assasatur Risaalah, 4th ed., 1424)



Sports and activity

Islam also encourages participation in sports in order to have and maintain a healthy body. Our Prophet (ﷺ) participated in archery, running, swimming, wrestling, horseback riding, etc., and has encouraged us also to be actively involved in these sports.

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said: "The strong (active) believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak (inactive) believer, while there is good in

both.” (Sahih Muslim)

Again, the strong believer is one who follows the guidelines set out in the Quran and the Sunnah. Hence, the physical activities mentioned above would naturally be part of a physical fitness routine, which would enable him/her to be involved in deeds that would be beneficial in this world and the hereafter.

All the above-mentioned components of Islam help us significantly to achieve optimal physical health, which contributes to our spiritual growth, level-headedness, and positive attitudes toward ourselves, others, as well as the environment we live in.

Our religion encourages us to make a concerted effort to practice all of them according to our abilities and always in moderation. With a clear understanding of the above issues, we can see the various benefits on an individual level as well as a societal one. Therefore, before rummaging in and around for secular solutions in regard to health issues, it is important for us, as Muslims, to investigate thoroughly and understand what Islam provides and promotes in terms of a healthy

lifestyle.

Thus, Islam not only gives a complete and comprehensive guide on how to maintain ourselves in regard to health issues, but also additionally provides spiritual cleansing and healing to otherwise purely physical activities by elaborating on the rewards we receive when we go through difficulties in terms of physical, mental, or emotional pain.

“Whenever a Muslim is afflicted by harm from sickness or other matters, Allah will expiate his sins like leaves drop from a tree.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

We, as human beings, should always remember the sole purpose we are created for, i.e., to worship Allah. The holistic health of a person depends on the strength of his belief; the belief that will direct one’s response to life’s joys, as well as its afflictions and adversities. Therefore, the stronger one’s belief and reliance on Allah and His guidance revealed through the Quran and Sunnah for one’s holistic healing and well-being, the better one will be equipped to achieve physical, mental, and spiritual health.



By Mubeena Ifthikkaruddin

Department of Education

Sr. Mubeena is a lecturer in the Education Department of IOU and a course facilitator for the diploma section. Previously, she worked as a teacher in the Faculty of Science and as a volunteer teacher at an Islamic Institute.

Take
care of
yourself

Stay away from anything that harms your body or your soul. If you have fallen into the habit of smoking or drinking, quit. If you have settled for abuse, don't. You deserve a healthy mind and body. Do not settle for anything else.



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